



## Ohel Tephach

The *Mishnah* (12:6) discusses a case of a beam that is bridging two walls and there is a source of *tumah* (*ha'met*) beneath it. The *Mishnah* teaches that if the width of the beam is a *tephach* then the *tumah* would spread beneath the beam, making everything under it *tameh*. The law presented in this *Mishnah*, as stated, should not be surprising, given that we learnt that in order for an object to act as an *ohel* to spread *tumah* it must be a *tephach* wide.

The *Tosfot Yom Tov* however comments that the novelty of the *Mishnah* is that even if the beam is not a *tephach* wide along its full length, it would still make anything underneath the entire beam *tameh*. This is the position of the *Rambam* (*Tumat Ha'Met* 12:7). The *Kesef Mishnah* citing the *Ri Korkus* explains, that the *Mishnah's* language appears to suggest that this is indeed the case. The *Mishnah* writes that "it spreads the *tumah* underneath all of it". The addition of the words "underneath all of it" appears to suggest that this would include even those parts that are not a *tephach* wide.

The position of the *Rambam* is actually the subject of debate. Recall that in order for flesh from a corpse to be a source of *tumah* under an *ohel*, it must be the volume of a *kezayit*. We will learn later in the *masechet* (15:10) about the case where there is a half *kezayit* of *tumah* in one house and another half in another. The *Mishnah* teaches that if a person puts one hand in each house, if the hands are each a *tephach* wide, it is considered as if there is a full *kezayit* under one *ohel* and the contents of both houses would become *tameh*. The *mefarshim* ask that granted that the hands might be a *tephach* wide, the arms will likely not. How then can the person act as a *ohel* to combine the two houses? According to the *Rambam* above, this is not a problem. Just like the beam can spread the *tumah* even under the areas that are less than a *tephach* wide, the *tumah* would also spread under the parts of the arm that are less than a *tephach* wide.

The *Rosh* (15:10) however understands that that *Mishnah* must be understood as referring to a case involving a fat person whose arms are a *tephach* wide. (Note that the word

*yad* used in the *Mishnah* can either refer to a hand or arm.) If however part of the arm was less than a *tephach* wide then the *tumah* would not spread beyond that point. The *Rosh* brings a proof from another *Mishnah* (15:2) that discusses a case of two square tiles, raised from the ground a *tephach*, and touching only at the corners. The *Mishnah* teaches that if the *tumat ha'met* is underneath one, then the *keilim* underneath the other are *tahor*. We find therefore, that the *tumah* cannot spread past a point that is less than a *tephach* wide.

The *Chazon Nachum* however explains that the *Rambam* would maintain that the case of the tiles is different. That case involves two distinct items. In order that the *tumah* can spread from one *ohel* to the next, they must be in contact by a *tephach*. Our case however involves a single item – the beam. Consequently, since *tumah* spread underneath it, it is not important if it narrows at parts.

The *Tifferet Yisrael* (*Boaz* 12:7) explains that a proof from the *Rambam's* position comes from an earlier *Mishnah* (7:2)<sup>1</sup>. Recall that we learnt that the area under the slanted walls of a tent is considered part of the *ohel*. Consequently, if there is a source of *tumah* in the *ohel*, even *keilim* that are under that slanted part that is only the width of finger in height would become *tameh*. We find therefore once *tumah* is inside an *ohel*, *tumah* spread underneath the entire *ohel*, including those parts that on their own would not qualify as an *ohel*.

The *Tifferet Yisrael* continues by suggesting a different answer to the *Chazon Nachum* above. He explains that the difference between the cases of the tent and beam as compared to the tiles, is that in the former cases the items were intended to be used as a covering – to act as an *ohel*. It is only in those cases that the *tumah* spreads underneath all of it. By contrast, in the case of the tiles which were never intended to be used as coverings, the *tumah's* spread is limited to only the spaces that fits the technical requirements of an *ohel*.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See also the *Mishnah Achrona*.

<sup>2</sup> The *Tifferet Yisrael* does continue with an additional answer similar to the *Chazon Nachum*. See inside.

### Revision Questions

אהלות י"א – י"ג – י"ב:

- Which further case that is similar to one referred to in the previous question is debated in a similar manner? (י"א: א')
- What are the four opinions regarding a house where a dog that ate a *kezayit* from a corpse died and lay on the threshold of the house? (י"א: א')
- How long after the dog ate the meat is it no longer a question? (י"א: א')
- Regarding the previous question, what is the law regarding fish and birds? (י"א: א')
- Explain the debate regarding the *chadut*, *menorah* and *chafisa*. (י"א: ח')
- In which case is there a debate? (י"א: ח')
- What is the law regarding *keilim* on the rim of the *chadut*? (י"א: ט')
- What is the law if *tumah* is found on the rim of the *chadut*? (י"א: ט')
- What is the law regarding *keilim* in the walls of the *chadut* if *tumah* is found in the house? (Include all three cases.) (י"א: ט')
- What is the law regarding *keilim* resting on a plank of wood that is placed over a new oven if *tumah* is found underneath the overhanging plank? (י"ב: א')
- How does the law change if the oven was old? (י"ב: א')
- What is the law regarding a case where a *srida* is placed tightly over an oven and *tumah* is found beneath the overhanging part? Inside the *tanur*? (י"ב: ב')
- Explain the debate regarding a case where a plank of wood is placed over an oven and only overhangs on two opposite sides and *tumah* is found under on side. (י"ב: ג')
- Explain the debate regarding a *b'tach*. (י"ב: ג')
- Explain the debate regarding a *sandel shel arisa*. (י"ב: ד')
- What is the law if regarding a case where the planks of wood on the first floor and the roof are spaced and aligned with one another, and *tumah* is found on the ground floor? The first floor? The roof? (י"ב: ה')
- How would the law differ if the planks in the roof aligned with the spaces left by the planks on the first floor? (י"ב: ה')
- What are the minimum dimensions of a round and square plank such that it can act as an *ohel*? (י"ב: ו')
- What must the circumference of a pillar (lying on its side) be such that *tumah* is transferred if it is found underneath (but not squashed by) the pole? (י"ב: ז')
- Explain the debate regarding a *kezayit* from a corpse that is found stuck to the threshold. (י"ב: ח')
- What is law if it stuck to the outside of the lintel? (י"ב: ח')
- What is the minimum measure (*shiur*) of the following spaces for *tumah* to be transferred through them:
  - A *Ma'or*?
  - *Sh'yarei Ma'or*? (Explain.)
  - A hole created by water? (י"ג: א')
- What other cases have the same ruling as the last case and in what situations does the size change? (י"ג: א')
- What is the *shiur* of a window made for ventilation for *tumah* to pass through it and when does this change? (י"ג: ב')

### Melbourne, Australia

**Sunday -Thursday**  
10 minutes before *Mincha*  
Mizrachi Shul  
Melbourne, Australia

**Friday & Shabbat**  
10 minutes before *Mincha*  
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### Efrat, Israel

*Shiur in English*

**Sunday -Thursday**  
Rabbi Mordechai Scharf  
9:00am  
Kollel Magen Avraham  
Reemon Neighbourhood

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### Next Week's Mishnayot...

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	שבת קודש
31 January י"ח שבט	1 February י"ט שבט	2 February כ' שבט	3 February כ"א שבט	4 February כ"ב שבט	5 February כ"ג שבט	6 February כ"ד שבט
Ohalot 13:3-4	Ohalot 13:5-6	Ohalot 14:1-2	Ohalot 14:3-4	Ohalot 14:5-6	Ohalot 14:7-15:1	Ohalot 15:2-3

